



Lower Namoi Cotton News

"news to feed the biggest bolls"

Newsletter inquiries..... contact Judy English, LNCGA Public Officer, phone 6795 3777.

November
2007

From the Chairman's Desk

From Rob Eveleigh, LNCGA Chairman, 0427 915 921

At last month's CGA meeting we discussed the functions and activities that the association proposes to run this year and each committee presented their budget. Major functions will include the field day and the crop competition and awards night.

The CGA has direct contact with Cotton Australia (CA) each month. We are lucky to have a regional office in Narrabri. Gus Macrae attends most meetings and we have a teleconference with Adam Kay regularly. CA recently established a grower advisory committee and Brendon Warnock represents our association on that committee. CGA executive member Mike Carberry continues on the Cotton Australia board. Both Mike and Brendon welcome any comments or issues that they can convey to CA.

Our next executive meeting will be held at CSD Wee Waa on the 21st of November. All growers and cotton industry personnel are welcome to attend. Bye for now and lets hope the rain continues – in the catchment this time!

CCA Activities

From Amber Diamond, CCA Executive Officer, 6752 5459

In recent weeks the main focus of the CCA Executive has been tying up the 2006/07 Survey Series. Draft reports have been received this week. We have also been compiling the new CCA directory – look out for it in early December. The latest (summer) edition of our magazine, *In Field Yarns*, is available now. Contact the office for a copy.

Regional Meetings are in planning at the moment for most valleys including the Namoi. Keep an eye on the our website (www.cottonconsultants.com.au), for finalised dates. The Regional Coordinator position for the Lower Namoi is still unfilled. I would love to hear from anyone who may be interested in taking on this role.

Ginning Sector Participating in BMP

From Gus Macrae, Cotton Australia, 0407 956 586

Between April and June this year, members of The Australian Cotton Ginners Association had 28 gins audited by the Cotton Textile Research Unit, CSIRO Textile and Fibre Technology against the draft Best Management Practices ginning guidelines. All of the Lower Namoi gins participated.

These initial audits assessed the draft BMP guidelines and individual gin performance so that industry can ultimately achieve consistent and better classing grades, with the view to running a certification program next year.

Strong Local interest in Healthy Soils

From Tracey Farrell, NSW DPI, 6799 1548 or 0427 260 344

Over 50 people attended the recent Healthy Soils Forum in Narrabri. There were a number of practical 'take home messages' from the day that can be used to shape management decisions. They are summarised below.

Aim to increase **soil organic carbon** – it enhances soil structure and leads to improved water infiltration and **water holding capacity**. As a rule of thumb, aim to retain 15–16 t DM/ha (stubble) per cropping cycle .

N fertiliser use efficiency by cotton can be 15–20% higher when; it is applied shortly before planting; when **less is applied in the pre-plant application** and subsequent in-crop applications are made; when urea rather than NH₃ is used for water-run applications and; when green manures are used to supply at least some of the required N.

Vetch **green manures** can fix ~200 kg N/ha, suppress Black Root Rot and **improve soil structure** which leads to **greater water infiltration**. However seedling diseases and Fusarium wilt may be more prevalent.

ESP is highly correlated with the output from EM38 surveys, making them a useful tool for identifying production constraints due to soil sodium.

Noticeboard

LNCGA Meeting – All welcome

At CSD on 21 Nov, 12 noon. Contact Judy English 6795 3777.

Namoi Water AGM

At Gunnedah Services Club on 28 Nov.

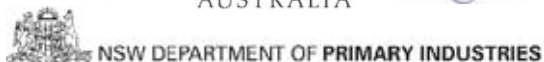
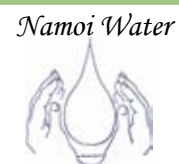
Contact John Clements 0428 896 554.

Irrigation Workshops on Request

½ day format. Specific topics. Contact Rod Jackson 6799 1537.

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There are a number of **simple visual measures** that are good indicators of a healthy cotton soil – Groundcover %, dispersion tests, nodulation scores for legumes and the white paint technique for identifying compaction.

The Forum was co-ordinated by the Cotton CRC and NSW DPI, funded through an initiative of the National Heritage Trust. There are a few additional copies of the proceedings. Contact the ACRI if you would like to read more.

Namoi CMA Drought Assistance Grants

From Jane Macfarlane, Namoi CMA, 6799 2417 or 0447 261 014.

Landholders in the Narrabri and Walgett RLPB areas can access up to \$10,000 per farming entity to implement on-ground works that enhance drought preparedness. To be eligible, growers must; complete an 'Expression of Interest', agree to attend 2 drought management workshops (several to choose from) and enter into a funding agreement with the Namoi CMA.

Expression of Interest forms can be accessed by downloading from www.namoi.cma.nsw.gov.au or by contacting Jane Macfarlane or Stacey Spanswick. Expressions of Interest close on the 23rd November.

LNCGA – Your Link to Cotton Research

From Phil Firth, LNCGA, 0427 657 532

The executive of the grower's association has formed a new committee to identify the issues that growers want research information about. The committee will communicate with researchers, the Australian Cotton Growers Research Association and industry extension. If growers have ideas or issues for research or extension that they think is being overlooked, then they can feed it to the members of this new committee and they will ensure that those issues are brought before the appropriate industry people or bodies. The committee will also discuss and flesh out any developing research issues from a grower's point of view. We will then ensure that point of view is heard. Growers on the committee are Phil Firth (chair) Andrew Greste (Lower Namoi ACGRA rep.), Geoff Phelps, Ben Stephens (Chair of the ACGRA) and Brendon Warnock. Rod Jackson from NSW DPI and Kate Lightfoot from the Cotton CRC are also members.

Please contact any of these people with ideas for research or extension.

Day Degree Update

Despite the unusually cool and wet weather of the past week, day degree accumulation since the 1st October is still ~20% above the long term average and subtly ahead of last year.

1/10–7/11 2007	Acc. Day Degrees			Acc. Cold Shocks		Acc. Hot Days	
	2007	2006	LTAv.	2007	LTAv.	2007	LTAv.
Boggabri	377	357	308	13	17	1	0
Narrabri	392	376	330	9	15	2	1
Wee Waa	405	394	339	9	14	3	2
B. Junction	407	403	345	9	14	3	2

Tech Talk

From Rod Jackson, Irrigation Officer, NSW DPI, 0429 901 908.

Do c-probes need calibration?

Calibration of a c-probe in the field is necessary if the device is to be used for determining the magnitude of plant water use, or a soil moisture deficit or to calculate a full soil water balance. Uncalibrated c-probes will show changes in soil water content over time so scheduling irrigation based on the slope of the line in the graphical output is acceptable. However to use uncalibrated probes in this way they still need to be "normalised".

Probes are normalised by matching the raw readings from each sensor at both 0% (held in air) and 100% water levels (submerged in water). Equipment suppliers should provide you with procedures for this.

Without normalising, these devices would only provides irrelevant raw data that varies slightly with each sensor. By matching the raw reading from each sensor to both 0% and 100% water levels, a comparison of readings taken by different sensors can be made on a common scale.

Once normalised, readings can then be displayed graphically using a default calibration equation (from the product's software). In many cases the graph will use "millimetres" as the units for the vertical axis.

Beware – this is only an estimation of soil moisture and should not be interpreted as the literal value. Field capacity and the refill point can be determined through relating known soil moisture conditions to probe values, and analysis of soil moisture trends.

Probes should be installed before the first in-crop irrigation. This allows them to "Bed-in" so as to be giving a reasonable reflection of soil moisture status thereafter i.e. they can be used to schedule the second irrigation.

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Lower Namoi Cotton Grower's
Association Inc.



Cotton Catchment Communities CRC



Namoi
CATCHMENT MANAGEMENT AUTHORITY



NSW DEPARTMENT OF PRIMARY INDUSTRIES



COTTON
AUSTRALIA

Namoi Water



BMP
COTTON
BEST MANAGEMENT
PRACTICES